

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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O R 081103Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6566
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TEL AVIV 4073

EXDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y FOR TEXT //ADDED EO, TAGS & SUBJ LINES//

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, IS, US
SUBJECT: THE ISRAELI VIEW OF US/ISRAELI RELATIONS

BUCHAREST FOR VIETS

SUMMARY: ISRAELIS OF ALL POLITICAL PERSUASIONS FORESEE THE
PSSIBILITY OF INCREASED STRAINS IN US/ISRAELI RELATIONS
IN THE MONTHS AHEAD OVER OUR DIFFERING APPROACHES TO THE
ARAB/ISRAELI DISPUTE. THE PRESIDENT'S PUBLIC STATEMENTS
ABOUT WITHDRAWAL TO THE 1967 BORDERS WITH MINOR ADJUSTMENTS
AND A PALESTINIAN HOMELAND AS INTEGRAL COMPONENTS OF AN
OVERALL SETTLEMENT, AS WELL AS HIS REFERENCE TO UNGA
RESOLUTION 181, CAUGHT ISRAELIS BY SURPRISE, ALTHOUGH THE
IMPLICATIONS WERE SLOW TO SINK IN. MANY HERE BELIEVE THAT
THESE STATEMENTS WILL ONLY ENCOURAGE THE ARABS TO DIG IN ON
THEIR DEMANDS FOR TOTAL WITHDRAWAL TO THE 1967 BORDERS PLUS
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A PLO-LED INDEPENDENT STATE, AND NO ISRAELI OR FOREIGN
OBSERVER HERE BELIEVES THAT EITHER OF THESE GOALS WILL BE
ACCEPTED BY ANY ISRAELI GOVERNMENT, PRESENT OR FUTURE.
SOME PROMINENT ISRAELIS BELEIVE THAT THE PRISIDENT'S STATEMENTS
HAD AN IMPACT ON THE ELECTION OUTCOME. WHILE UNCERTAIN
HOW THE US NOW INTENDS TO PROCEED, LIKUD SUPPORTERS
AND OTHERS AS WELL BEGIN TO LOOK TO BEGIN, DAYAN, AND

WEIZMAN TO DEFEND VITAL ISRAELI INTERESTS MORE VIGOROUSLY THAN HAD THE OUTGOING LEADERSHIP TRIUMVIRATE. LIKUD IS PROJECTING AN IMAGE TO CONFIDENCE THAT THERE NEED NOT BE A CONFRONTATION WITH THE US, BUT ALIGNMENT LEADERS (E.G., ALLON) SEEM CONCERNED THAT BEGIN'S HARDLINE POSTURE MAY ACTUALLY BRING IT ABOUT. THE UNANIMOUS DESIRE TO MAINTAIN CLOSE US/ISRAELI RELATIONS WHETEHER OR NOT THERE IS AGREEMENT ON HOW TO APPROACH THE COMPLEX ISSUES OF THE ARAB/ISRAELI DISPUTE IS CLEARLY A FACTOR IN THE COALITION NEGOTIATIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. ISRAELIS ACROSS THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM ARE INCREASINGLY WORRIED BY WHAT THEY SEE AS A WIDENING DIVERGENCE IN OUR APPROACHES TO MIDDLE EAST PEACE NEGOTIATIONS. THE ISRAELI PRESS HAS GREATLY MAGNIFIED THE IMPORT AND IMPLICATION OF RECENT PRESIDENTIAL STATEMENTS, EXACERBATING ANXIETIES REGARDING A POSSIBLE SHOWDOWN BETWEEN US IN THE MONTHS AHERA.

2. THE PRESIDENT'S PUBLIC STATEMENTS REGARDING ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL TO THE 1967 BORDERS WITH MINOR ADJUSTMENTS AND A PALESTINIAN HOMELAND AS INTEGRAL PARTS OF AN OVERALL SETTLEMENT ARE NOW BEING INTERPRETED HERE WITH DEEP CONCERN. REFERENCES TO THE SUBSTANTIVE CONTENT OF PEACE AS PART OF THE CONTEXT OF A FINAL SETTLEMENT HAVE BEEN WELCOMED, BUT INEVITABLY ATTENTION HERE FOCUSES ON THOSE OTHER ASPECTS OF HIS COMMENTS WHICH ARE INCOMPATIBLE WITH ISRAELI VIEWS. WE HAVE UNDERScoreD AT EVERY OPPORTUNITY THAT THESE STATEMENTS HAVE STRESSED THE NEED FOR THE PARTIES TO WORK OUT
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NEGOTIATING AGREEMENTS AMONG THEMSELVES. BUT ISRAELIS FEAR THAT THE PRESIDENT'S STATEMENTS MAY BE FORECLOSING OPTIONS FOR THEM OR MAKING NEGOTIATIONS MORE DIFFICULT.

3. THEY CLAIM THAT THE PRESIDENT'S STATEMENTS ENCOURAGE THE ARABS TO DIG IN ON THEIR DEMANDS FOR FULL WITHDRAWAL TO THE 1967 BORDERS AND THE CREATION OF A PALESTINIAN STATE--INITIALLY IN THE WEST BANK AND GAZA. THEY NOW ALMOST UNIVERSALLY SEE "HOMELAND" AS A EUPHEMISM FOR "STATE." AND AN INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN STATE REMAINS TOTALLY ANATHEMA TO OVER 90 PERCENT OF THE ISRAELI ELECTORATE. THEY FEAR WE MAY BE JEOPARDIZING THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS--OR REDUCING ISRAEL'S ROOM FOR MANEUVER AND BARGAINING

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 TEL AVIV 4073

EXDIS

BUCHAREST FOR VIETS

LEVERAGE ONCE NEGOTIATIONS ACTUALLY GET UNDER WAY. TO UNDERSTAND THE ISRAELI VIEW, IT IS IMPORTANT TO STRESS THAT ALMOST NO ISRAELIS BELIEVE THE ARABS ARE INTERESTED IN A GENUINE PEACE SETTLEMENT, BUT RATHER IN OBTAINING ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL TO THE 1967 BORDERS AND A PALESTINIAN STATE FOR A MINIMUM POLITICAL PRICE. THIS CONVICTION IS LINKED TO A VERY WIDESPREAD VIEW THAT WAR IS INEVITABLE, SOONER OR LATER, AND THAT TO FIGHT AGAIN FROM THE 1967 BOUNDARIES WOULD BE DISASTROUS IN LIGHT OF THEIR 1973 EXPERIENCE. MANY, PARTICULARLY ON THE RIGHT, FURTHER BELIEVE THAT THE ARAB OBJECTIVE TRANSCENDS THEIR STATED GOALS, AND THAT THIS IS BUT AN INTERIM STATE PRECEDING ARAB DEMANDS FOR WITHDRAWAL TO THE 1947 PARTITION LINES AND THE FINAL MILITARY, POLITICAL, AND ECONOMIC COLLAPSE OF THE COUNTRY. (THIS EXPLAINS THE ALMOST HYSTERICAL REACTION HERE TO THE WHITE HOUSE SPOKESMAN'S RECENT REFERENCE TO THE 1947 UNGA RESOLUTION.)

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4. IN ANALYZING THE DYNAMICS OF US RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL ON THE ONE HAND AND THE ARABS ON THE OTHER, MANY ISRAELIS FEAR THAT IN A NEGOTIATING CRUNCH WE WILL EXERT MORE PRESSURE ON THEM THAN ON THE ARABS. AND THEY ARE SKEPTICAL

THAT WE WOULD BE PREPARED TO (OR COULD) PUT EQUAL PRESSURE ON THE ARABS TO ACCOMMODATE ESSENTIAL ISRAELI INTERESTS.

5. WE HAVE HEARD FROM A NUMBER OF ISRAELIS THAT THE PRESIDENT'S STATEMENTS CONTRIBUTED TO THE LIKUD VICTORY AND THE ALIGNMENT DEFEAT. ALL HERE CLEARLY RECOGNIZE THAT OTHER FACTORS--E.G., DISILLUSIONMENT WITH 29 YEARS OF UNINTERRUPTED LABOR RULE, THE SCANDALS AND CORRUPTION IN THE ALIGNMENT, RABIN'S RESIGNATION, THE NATION'S SERIOUS SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS--HAD MORE TO DO WITH THE COUTCOME. OUR PUBLIC STAND MAY HAVE COST THE ALIGNMENT FROM THREE TO FIVE SEATS, I.E., THAT UNDECIDED VOTERS, SEEING THE BLUEPRINT OF A DIFFICULT PERIOD AHEAD IN US/ISRAELI RELATIONS, DECIDED TO OPT FOR A STRONGER GOVERNMENT. OUR PUBLIC REMARKS, IT IS SAID, UNDERCUT COMPLETELY RABIN'S CLAIM THAT ONE OF HIS MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS WAS THE MAINTENANCE OF EFFECTIVE AND CLOSE US/ISRAELI COORDINATION. ALSO, SINCE THE STRAINS BEGAN BEFORE THE ELECTION, ISRAELI OBSERVERS NOTE THAT THEY CANNOT BE ATTRIBUTED NOW TO OUR REACTION TO BEGIN'S POST-ELECTION STATEMENTS.

6. ISRAELIS ARE UNCERTAIN HOW WE INTEND TO PROCEED, AND THERE IS DEEP ANXIETY ABOUT THE FUTURE. LIKUD SUPPORTERS AND SOME OTHERS NOW ARE SAYING THEY ARE ENCOURAGED THAT ISRAEL WILL NOW HAVE A GOVERNMENT WITH A TOUGHER FOREIGN POLICY ORIENTATION. IT IS BELIEVED THAT BEGIN, DAYAN, AND WEIZMAN (GOOD SOLID HAWKS) WILL MORE VIGOROUSLY DEFEND VITAL ISRAELI INTERESTS THAN RABIN, ALLON, AND PERES HAD DONE. THEY WILL HOLD OUT LONGER, STRIKE A BETTER BARGAIN IF THEY ARE FORCED TO DO SO, AND RESIST TO THE UTMOST THE CESSION OF ANY PART OF WHAT IS REGARDED AS CONFIDENTIAL

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ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL--I.E., THE WEST BANK.

7. YET ISRAELIS IN ALL PARTIES WANT SOMEHOW TO PRESERVE CLOSE US/ISRAELI RELATIONS IN THE PERIOD AHEAD. THE LIKUD PUBLICLY IS EXPRESSING CONFIDENCE THAT THERE WILL BE NO CONFRONTATION. THE ALIGNMENT AND THE MODERATE PRESS ARE LESS CONFIDENT, WORRIED THAT BEGIN'S TOUGH STATEMENTS, E.G., ON LIBERATED TERRITORIES MAY SET IN MOTION A CHAIN OF EVENTS WHICH COULD PLACE ENORMOUS STRAIN ON US/ISRAEL RELATIONS. OTHERS PERHAPS WOULD WELCOME SUCH A DEVELOPMENT FOR A SHORT TIME IN ORDER TO DRAMATIZE THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF A BEGIN GOVERNMENT ESTABLISHING AN EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE US, AND THUS PRECIPITATE NEW ELECTIONS.

8. THE DESIRE TO MAINTAIN EFFECTIVE US/ISRAELI RELATIONS IS AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN THE COALITION NEGOTIATIONS NOW

NEARING A CRUNCH. BEGIN CLEARLY WOULD LIKE THE STRONGEST AND BROADEST POSSIBLE COALITION (ALSO FOR DOMESTIC REASONS) SUPPORTING HIM WHEN HE COMES TO WASHINGTON. HE HAS CHOSEN DAYAN TO BE FOREIGN MINISTER IN PART FOR HIS EXPERIENCE IN NEGOTIATING WITH US. MANY PEOPLE, ISRAELIS AND NON-ISRAELIS, HAVE BEEN ENCOURAGING THE DMC TO GO INTO THE COALITION PARTIALLY IN THE HOPE THAT THE DMC WILL BE ABLE TO MODERATE THE CONTENT AND TONE OF THE GOVERNMENT'S FOREIGN POLICY. IT IS BELIEVED THAT THIS WOULD EASE PRESSURES ON BOTH SIDES (US AND ISRAEL) AND MAKE IT MORE POSSIBLE TO WORK TOGETHER IN A REASONABLE ATMOSPHERE IN EXPLORING PROSPECTS FOR RESUMPTION OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE.

LEWIS

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